



**Testimony from Verified Voting**

To the Committee on GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND ELECTIONS  
Connecticut General Assembly, regarding:

**Senate Bill No. 348  
AN ACT CONCERNING POST-ELECTION AUDITS**

10 March 2014

**OPPOSITION TO A PORTION OF BILL NO. 348 – Relying ONLY on machine-tabulated audit tabulation is too risky. A portion of manual tabulation serves an essential role.**

Honorable Chairs and Members of the Committee, Verified Voting urges the Committee to retain the manual count in Section (d) of the proposed bill.

Eliminating the manual aspect of the audit for the purpose of streamlining the audit is akin to eliminating the removal of the appendix portion of an appendectomy. Just doing anesthesia and prep without actually applying a scalpel is certainly going to save time, but to no particular advantage and likely to the detriment of the patient. The manual audit serves an essential role of ensuring that humans have checked the tabulation and not just machines. Machines are subject to a wide variety of types of errors, many of which are unanticipated or are not caught in pre-election certification checks. For instance, errors in ballot definition files, pens used for marking, and vote-interpretation and tabulation algorithm files are all known machine errors that have gotten past certification in the past.

These are examples of errors that would likely get past a second machine tabulation, as the new bill language proposes. Additionally, we've all learned that we can't anticipate all the threats to machine performance so we should expect new threats and have procedures in place to catch those errors.

Manual counts offer that assurance. Some manual counts can be burdensome but they don't have to be. Outstanding improvements to time, cost and efficiency have been developed recently for risk-limiting, post-election manual audits. The improvements can be supported by a combination of machine-assisted tabulation and a smart, statistical comparison audit conducted manually.<sup>1, 2, 3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Evidence-Based Elections, PB. Stark and D.A. Wagner, 2012  
<http://statistics.berkeley.edu/~stark/Preprints/evidenceVote12.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Risk-Limiting Post-Election Audits: Why and How, 2012  
<http://statistics.berkeley.edu/~stark/Preprints/RLAwhitepaper12.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> American Statistical Association letter supporting "Risk-Limiting Post-Election Audits: Why and How" 2012  
<http://www.amstat.org/policy/pdfs/StarkEtAlLetterOfSupport.pdf>

We applaud the General Assembly for recognizing the value of real post-election audits and urge it to consider these innovations that make post-election audits both more effective, and more efficient, at the same time. It is demonstrated that a well-conducted audit elevates voter confidence. Use technology, but not blindly—do not eliminate the manual audit in Connecticut. To do so would be a giant leap backward not only in transparency of elections but also in reliability of the election outcomes.

We look forward to any opportunity to work with Connecticut to improve post-election audits. Please don't hesitate to contact us if we can answer any questions on this matter.

Very truly yours,

Pamela Smith  
President  
Verified Voting  
[pam@verifiedvoting.org](mailto:pam@verifiedvoting.org)  
760-434-VOTE (8683)